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Message Text

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21
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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COMMERCE:SMILLER (SUBS)
---------- 057100
R 050040Z FEB 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
INFO AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTIO, BTRA, BC

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS - COMSAT GENERAL

FOR AMBASSADOR

1. ON 2 FEB JOHN JENKINS, PROJECT ENGINEERING MANAGER OF COMSAT GENERAL CORP. VISITED BOTSWANA DESK TO DISCUSS HIS COMPANY'S PLANS FOR BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND. JENKINS VISITED BOTSWANA IN 1974 AND HAD BEEN PLANNING SECOND VISIT FOR MARCH 11-12 1976. COMSAT'S PROPOSAL IS TO INSTALL SATELLITE GROUND STATIONS TO ENABLE BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND TO HOOK UP DIRECTLY WITH INTELSTAT, WITHOUT GOING THRU THIRD COUNTRY. BOTSWANA'S PRESENT TELEGRAPHIC LINK GOES THRU SOUTH AFRICA WHICH GETS LION'S SHARE OF REVENUES FROM BOTSWANA'S TRAFFIC, ACCORDING TO JENKINS. WHILE BOTSWANA'S PRESENT PLANS CALL FOR CONNECTION TO PANAFTEL
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IN ZAMBIA, BOTSWANA'S OWN EARTH STATION WOULD PROVIDE IT

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INCREASED REVENUES AND INDEPENDENCE. COMSAT WOULD INITIAL-
LY ACT AS CONSULTANT TO ADVISE GOB AND GOS ON HOW TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF IMPROVED INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION FACIL-
ITIES. THEY WOULD THEN DEVELOP SATELLITE GROUND STATIONS
BASED ON NEED OF GOB AND GOS.

2. JENKINS CABLED E.M. TUMELO, DIRECTOR, POSTS AND TELE-

COMMUNICATIONS EXPLAINING PLAN TO VISIT BOTSWANA IN MARCH
TO PRESENT PROPOSAL. ON 2 FEB TUMELO REPLIED THAT HE WAS
NOT INTERESTED AT THIS TIME AND TO COME BACK IN TWO YEARS.
BASED ON TUMELO'S REACTION JENKINS WILL NOT VISIT BOTSWANA
AS PLANNED. SINCE PROPOSAL OFFERS ADVANTAGES TO GOB,
REQUEST EMBASSY ATTEMPT DETERMINE IF REJECTION BASED ON
BUDGET, POLICY, PERCEIVED NEED, OR PERSONALITY CONFLICT.
APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW PROPOSAL MIGHT BE COUCHED
FOR POSITIVE RESPONSE.

3. JENKINS REQUESTED APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS
FOR BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND WITH AMBASSADOR DURING
WEEK MARCH 8-12. DESK OFF TOLD JENKINS AMBASSADOR VISIT-
ING LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND DURING MARCH BUT DATES UNCERTAIN.
IF AMBASSADOR WILL BE IN GABORONE DURING SECOND WEEK OF
MARCH, WOULD EMBASSY ADVISE JENKINS TO VISIT BOTSWANA
REGARDLESS OF ATTITUDE OF TUMELO? WHILE JENKINS DEPARTS
U.S. 5 FEB FOR FIRST LEG OF TRIP IN EUROPE, DEPT CAN PASS
MESSAGE THRU COMSAT. JENKINS SCHEDULED ARRIVE MBABANE
7 MARCH, DEPART 10 MARCH FOR JOHANNESBURG. CAN ARRIVE
GABORONE 11 MARCH IF ADVISED TO DO SO.

4. WHILE THERE MAY BE FACTORS OF WHICH DEPT UNAWARE,
COMSAT PROPOSAL APPEARS TO OFFER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
ADVANTAGES TO BOTSWANA AND IMPORTANT TRADE OPPORTUNITY
FOR U.S. IF EMBASSY CONCURS, APPRECIATE EFFORTS IN
OPENING THE RIGHT DOORS. KISSINGER

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